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ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment can be devastating and have tremendous impact on the emotional well-being, physical health, and vocational success of those who experience it. It is especially important for outdoor education program staff to proactively address sexual harassment because these programs often take place in remote locations that may make escape from a sexually harassing situation difficult or impossible; because outdoor adventure programs are often male-dominated, and intensive male bonding may create an environment that leads to violence against women; and because the power differential between outdoor adventure leaders and participants may prevent participants from objecting to or resisting sexual harassment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission definition of sexual harassment is divided into its three parts, and examples from adventure programs are provided to illustrate each one. Proactive strategies include developing a sexual harassment policy that includes easy reporting procedures; ensuring that staff understand the policy; training staff in interrupting harassment and in using nonsexist language and teaching styles; ensuring that participants understand the policy; considering the dynamics of sexual harassment when forming groups; and providing a mechanism for communicating with someone outside of the immediate situation when in remote locations. Tables present definitions of sexual harassment, effects associated with sexual harassment trauma syndrome, and sex-related names of rock-climbing routes. Contains 20 references. (TD)

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Sexual Harassment and Experiential Education Programs: A Closer Look

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This chapter will examine the influence of sexual harassment on experiential education programs. Sexual harassment was brought to the forefront of public attention by the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas. People across the United States and around the world watched the Senate hearings live on television. With her testimony, Anita Hill launched the country on an intensive examination of the nature of the relations between women and men. Despite this period of intense scrutiny, experiential educators have just begun to examine the effects of sexual harassment on their staff, participants, and programs.

Sexual harassment has enormous potential to influence the experiences of both participants and staff in experiential education programs because of the intense, physical, 24-hour-a-day, remote nature of many programs. In a recent study (Loeffler, 1995), female outdoor leaders were asked if they had experienced sexual harassment in their outdoor leadership careers; 52% of the women in the interview sample said they had. Other than Loeffler's study, research has yet to be done on the occurrence rates of sexual harassment in experiential education programs.

Extensive research has been completed in academic and workplace settings. One study found that 30% of undergraduate women were sexually harassed during their college experience by an instructor (Dziech & Weiner, 1984), and another study found that 78% of undergraduate women had been sexually harassed by their peers (Paludi & Barickman, 1991). In the largest sexual harassment study done to date, it was found that 42% of 10,644 women had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace (United States Merit Systems Protection Board, 1991). Given the findings of these and other studies, sexual harassment is a pervasive problem in both academic and workplace settings. Because of the extent of the problem in other settings, it can be concluded that sexual harassment takes place in experiential education settings and that it is imperative that experiential education program staff take proactive steps to prevent its occurrence.

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Definitions of Sexual Harassment

Since 1964, government regulations in the United States have prohibited sexual harassment and the legal system has determined that sexual harassment is illegal in employment settings and educational institutions. Workplace sexual harassment is prohibited as a form of sexual discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Federal Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sexual harassment in educational settings that receive federal funding.

Several definitions of sexual harassment have evolved from the legal, educational, and psychological literature. Table 1 summarizes some of these definitions.

Table 1
Summary of Sexual Harassment Definitions

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly a term or condition of an individuals' employment; (2) submission to, or a rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such contact has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

National Advisory Council on Women's Education Programs
Academic sexual harassment is the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality or sexual identity of the student in a manner which prevents or impairs that student's full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate, or opportunities.

McKinnon (1979)
Sexual harassment . . . refers to the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power. Central to this concept is the use of power derived from one social sphere to lever benefits or impose deprivations in another. . . . When one is sexual, the other material, the cumulative sanction is particularly potent.

Fitzgerald (1990)
Sexual harassment consists of the sexualization of an instrumental relationship through the introduction or imposition of sexist or sexual remarks, requests, or requirements, in the context of a formal power differential. Harrassment can occur where no such formal power differential exists, if the behavior is unwanted by, or offensive to, the woman. Instances of harassment can be classified into the following continuum; gender harassment, seductive behavior, solicitation of sexual activity by promise of reward or threat of punishment, and sexual imposition or assault.

When a formal power differential exists, all sexist or sexual behavior is seen as harassment, since the woman is not considered to be in a position to object, resist, or give fully free consent; when no such power differential exists, it is the recipient's experience and perception of the behavior as offensive that constitutes the defining factor.

(Paludi & Barickman, 1991, p.3)

Paludi and Barickman (1991) suggest that "definitions of sexual harassment are important because they educate . . . and promote discussion and conscientious evaluation of these experiences" (p. 2). Definitions also help the person who has experienced sexual harassment recognize and identify it for what it is and, therefore, begin to heal from it. Fitzgerald et al. (1988) found that many women who experience relatively blatant sexual harassment fail to label it as such.

The Effects of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be devastating and have tremendous impact on the emotional well-being, physical health, and vocational success of those who experience it (Paludi & Barickman, 1991). Dziech and Weiner (1984) found that it causes students to relinquish work, educational advancement, and career opportunities. Research indicates that 21%-82% of women who have been sexually harassed report a deterioration of their emotional and/or physical condition (Koss, 1990). The emotional and physical effects of sexual harassment are similar to rape and incest and meet the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (Koss, 1990). Shullman (cited in Paludi & Barickman, 1991) developed the label "Sexual Harassment Trauma Syndrome" to describe the constellation of effects surrounding sexual harassment which are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
Sexual Harassment Trauma Syndrome

Emotional Reactions
Anxiety
Shock, Denial
Anger, Fear
Insecurity, Betrayal
Humiliation
Confusion
Self-consciousness
Shame
Powerlessness
Guilt
Isolation
Frustration

Physical Reactions
Headaches
Sleep disturbances
Lethargy
Gastrointestinal distress
Hypervigilance
Dermatological reactions
Weight fluctuations
Nightmares
Phobias, Panic reactions
Genitourinary distress
Respiratory problems
Substance abuse

Changes in Self-Perception
Negative self-esteem
Lack of competency
Lack of control
Isolation
Hopelessness
Powerlessness

Social, Interpersonal, and Sexual Effects
Withdrawal
Self-preoccupation
Lack of trust
Lack of focus
Fear of new people, situations
Changes in social network patterns
Negative attitudes & behavior in sexual relationships
Sexual disorders associated with stress & trauma
Changes in dress or physical appearance

Career Effects
Changes in study and work habits
Loss of job or promotion
Unfavorable performance evaluations
Drop in academic or work performance because of stress
Lower grades as punishment for reporting sexual harassment or for noncompliance with sexual advances
Absenteeism
Withdrawal from work and school
Changes in career goals

(Paludi & Barickman, 1991, p. 29)

Examples of Sexual Harassment in Outdoor Programs

Returning to the realm of experiential education, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission definition of sexual harassment is divided into its three parts (Paludi & Barickman,1991), and examples from adventure programs are provided to illustrate the range of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment. The examples were adapted from a University of Minnesota Sexual Harassment pamphlet.

Part One of the Definition: Certain behavior constitutes sexual harassment when "submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancements":

1. Leslie was attending a multi-activity, semester-length, outdoor instructor course. Leslie was very impressed by the interest one of her instructors, a famous mountaineer, showed in her during the course. Because of his encouragement, she chose to specialize in mountaineering. Later, she realized that his interest had only been sexual. She was astonished and angry. She felt humiliated and foolish for having believed he respected her outdoor work. She never finished her instructors' course and has taken a job in another profession.
2. Tony, an instructor for an adventure program, likes to joke with his students. He often uses sexual innuendo and imagery as the basis for his humor. One day, as a joke, he suggests that the better looking a women is, the more help (sexual and otherwise) she will get from him. Sandra is an attractive student on Tony's programs who needs extra help with foot care since she has diabetes. She is deeply offended and scared by Tony's attitude and tries to stay far away from him. After a long hike, Sandra notices that she has a blister on her foot but she feels too uncomfortable to seek out Tony's help and as a result develops a foot ulcer and needs to be evacuated.
3. Since the first week of the outdoor semester program, Michael has been uncomfortable with how one of the male instructors has been looking at him. Now Michael must see the instructor about his lesson plan for the next day. The instructor told Michael that the only time he could meet with him was at his tent that evening.

Part Two of the Definition: Certain behavior constitutes sexual harassment when "submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions or academic decisions affecting such individual":

1. Mary is an assistant instructor completing her second course at the adventure education program. The chief instructor on her course has been confiding details of his personal life to her and recently has begun pressuring her for sex. When she refuses, he threatens that she will not get a good evaluation and she will not be promoted to instructor. She feels nobody would believe her if she complained because of his status at the program.

2. Jill is recently laid off as administrative assistant for a large outdoor program. She had been involved with her boss for several months, but broke off the relationship before she got the layoff notice. She is told the layoff was due to budget cuts, but Jill handled the budget and knows that this was not the reason.
3. Connie is a student in an outdoor leadership development program. Her instructor invites her to share a hotel room the night after the course ends. When she refuses, he accuses her of being immature. He tells her she probably couldn't handle the demands of outdoor leadership.

Part Three of the Definition: Certain behavior constitutes sexual harassment when "such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment":

1. Tanya depends on her part-time job in the gear room to help pay for her tuition for a semester-length adventure program. One Saturday, while she was alone with her boss, he touched her leg in a way that made her uncomfortable. She moved away from him and went about her tasks of the day. Another time while Tanya was cleaning the stoves, her boss came up behind her and started to rub her neck. She asked him to stop and he said, "I was only trying to be friendly." His advances continued and Tanya became so uncomfortable she quit her job in the gear room. Unable to find another job, she couldn't pay the tuition and had to drop out of the adventure program.
2. On the first day of the rafting trip, the guide asked students to fill out a survey about themselves. The survey asked about their rafting experience, their food preferences, and their health. One of the questions asked was whether the students liked recreational sex. Another of the questions asked if the students were on birth control.
3. Students in a mountaineering course know their instructor is in a sexual relationship with one of their coursemates. Although the instructor and the student try to be discreet about their relationship, the other students notice the special attention their coursemate receives. They feel their coursemate has an unfair advantage and they resent it.

As noted in Fitzgerald's (1990) definition, sexual harassment can occur in instances in which a formal power difference does not exist. Peer harassment is the term used to describe the sexual harassment that occurs between two students, two employees, or two colleagues when an institutional power difference does not exist (Paludi & Barickman, 1991). Group harassment is the term used to describe the sexual harassment that occurs when a single person is harassed by a group of peers. The following examples, from the author's experience, illuminate how peer and group harassment may occur in adventure programs:

1. Shelly, a student in a mountain search and rescue course, is struggling to set up the knots and carabiner arrangement of a lowering system. A fellow student says, "Women just can't understand mechanical things" and grabs the carabiners out of Shelly's hand and proceeds to set up the system. Shelly begins to doubt her ability and hesitates to volunteer again to set up the lowering system. As a result, she never learns the system and fails the course.
2. Judy is a newly hired ropes course instructor. Her co-workers regularly leave pornographic pictures where she will find them. She dreads going to work and is finding it harder and harder to keep herself motivated because of the situation.
3. Some rock-climbing students are traveling to the climbing area on the program bus. A male student tells a story of a woman climber who had large breasts. He says he'd "sure like to climb those mountains" and gestures suggestively at the female student sitting beside him.
4. Molly is the only female student on a mountaineering course. The group gets stuck in a mountain hut for six days because of white-out conditions. One day, Molly's fellow students decide she needs to become one of the guys and they pin her down and cut her hair.
5. Maria, a student on a one-month backpacking course, mentions missing her partner, Joan, back home during a debrief. Her fellow students begin to make excuses not to sleep in her tent. Maria finds rocks hidden in her backpack.

Sexual Harassment and Participant Safety

Experiential education programs advertise many benefits for their participants. A recent Colorado Outward Bound School catalog (1992) states that its "courses are designed to offer experiences, both strenuous and bold which demand an increase in initiative, self-confidence, personal responsibility, leadership, fitness, teamwork and commitment to others." Outdoor programs often place people in a physically and/or psychologically demanding and stressful environment to facilitate building of trust, self-confidence, and acceptance of personal responsibility (Durian, Owens, & Owen, 1980). This list of intended benefits differs greatly from the effects on participants if they are subjected to sexual harassment. According to John Dewey, a proponent of experiential education, the goals and objectives of our educational programs must be reflected in our educational means (McDermott, 1981). Hunt (1990) coined the phrase "valuational schizophrenia" to describe the results "if the ends of a program and the means that the program uses are disjunctive" (p. 29). If experiential education programs do not proactively address sexual harassment in all its forms, they will suffer from valuational schizophrenia because the damaging effects of sexual harassment are in severe contrast with the goals of most programs. Experiential education program participants can never reach their full psychological and physical potential if sexual harassment occurs.

Along with the serious emotional, health, and vocational effects, sexual harassment may affect the physical safety of outdoor education program participants. Adventure programs often take place in remote locations. This remoteness may make the escape from a sexually harassing situation difficult, expensive, or impossible. As well, persons experiencing sexual harassment may be dependent on their instructors for navigation, backcountry travel, or belaying. Imagine the psychological trauma of having the person who sexually harassed you yesterday, be responsible for your life and safety the next day. Students like Sandra and Shelly, mentioned in the previous examples, may be in safety-compromised situations because instructional help and guidance is not available to them because of sexual harassment. Shelly could fall because she wasn't given the opportunity to learn the lowering system and Sandra suffered a severe foot injury because it was not safe for her to approach her instructor for assistance. If an experiential educator is being sexually harassed by her/his co-workers, her/his judgment may be impeded and this could affect the safety of the students.

One area of outdoor programs that has been a serious point of contention has been "consensual" relationships between outdoor instructors and adult students. In years past, in some outdoor programs, it was considered a "job perk" for male instructors to choose a female student to have sex with while on the course. The male instructors gave the rationale that they were away from their usual sexual outlets and needed relief (Hunt, 1990). An article entitled "The Stone Syndrome or Skin in the Adventure Trade" in *Rock and Ice* magazine demonstrates this attitude is still prevalent (Bangs, 1988). The author, an adventure travel company owner, sees nothing wrong with guides having sexual relationships with clients. In fact, he almost glorifies the practice. Bangs quotes a male guide who says, "I don't want to make like all our guides are gigolos. This is not a stud service. On the other hand, I've had an affair on almost every tour I've guided" (p. 19). Bangs quotes another guide who acknowledges the fundamental power difference that exists between outdoor leaders and participants:

> It has to do with control. Somewhere along the way most people realize they're not in control of their environment, or their lives. And neither are the people around them. There's something very alluring about the appearance of control, self-reliance, and power, and adventure guides seem to have it. We really know our jobs well. Fortune 500 presidents, celebrities, politicians join our trips, and they look to us for all the answers: how to set up the tent, where to go to the bathroom. They can't call their secretaries or an ambulance so they become very dependent on their guides. And it's a huge dependency. The guides feed them, administer first aid, tell them when it's time to eat, when to sleep. We appear to control the group, and the elements. "Is it going to rain tonight?" "Fuck yes!" and it will. (p. 18)

Later in the article, the same guide is quoted as saying, "Male guides have more of a romantic life in terms of numbers than probably anyone. They live a life that could only be imitated by a playboy millionaire" (p. 19). Hunt (1990), one of the eminent ethicists of experiential education, considers student/teacher and client/guide sexual relationships to be unethical in the extreme because such a relationship violates the fundamental nature of the teaching affiliation.

According to Fitzgerald (1990), "When a formal power differential exists, all sexist or sexual behavior is seen as harassment, since the person is not considered to be in a position to object, resist, or give fully free consent" (p. 38). By this definition, there cannot be a consensual relationship when a power differential exists between individuals. As so aptly put by the guide above, there is a fundamental power differential between outdoor adventure leaders and participants. To conclude, within the confines of these so-called "consensual" sexual relationships, sexual harassment occurs.

Fraternal Bonding

The theory of fraternal bonding offers a possible explanation of why sexual harassment may occur in outdoor adventure programs. Lyman (1987) suggests that men use shared experience, fun, and humor as the base for fraternal bonding. Curry (1991) defines "the fraternal bond as a force, link, or affectionate tie that unites men" (p. 119). In addition, Lyman (1987) found "the humor of male bonding relationships generally sexually aggressive, and frequently consist of sexist or racist jokes" (p. 151). Fine (1987) reports that "women who wish to be part of a male-dominated group typically must accept patterns of male bonding . . . and be willing to engage in coarse joking and teasing" (p. 131). This coarse joking can frequently be defined as sexual harassment and may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

In some settings, outdoor adventure programs are male-dominated and filled with sexual joking. Examples of this joking are found in published rock-climbing guides (Harlin, 1986; Steiger, 1985; Waugh, 1982; Webster, 1987). Rock-climbing guides provide maps and route information for particular rock-climbing areas. The person(s) who make the first ascent of a rock climb have the honor of naming it. Table 3 lists the sex-related names of rock climbs found in four climbing guides representing various locations around the United States. From the first-ascent information provided in the climbing guides, it was determined that these climbs were all named by men. These names exemplify how fraternal bonding through joking can occur in an adventure setting.

In terms of women's safety, this joking is no laughing matter. Curry (1991), in a study of fraternal bonding in the locker room, found that in order to affirm their masculinity, men engaged in conversations that treated "women as objects, encouraged sexist attitudes toward women, and in its extreme, promoted rape culture"

(p. 119). Intensive fraternal bonding in all-male groups or male-dominated groups may create an environment that leads to violence against women. An example of this is when members of a sports team gang-rape together (Sanday, 1990). According to Melnick (1992), gang rape is associated with small, all-male groups of tightly knit members who frequently live and eat together. In these situations, group loyalty "is often so strong that sometimes it can override personal integrity" (p. 32).

Table 3
The Sex-Related Names of Rock-climbing Routes

Names Referring to Female Anatomy	Names Referring to Male Anatomy
Big Breasted Bikers	Dildoe Pinnacle
Throbbing Labias	The Phallus
Magnolia Thunder Pussy	Family Jewels
Here Come the Jugs	Handsome and Well-Hung
Names That Degrade Women	**Names that Degrade Gay People**
Bitch	Ethics are for Faggots
Topless Tellers	Homosexual Armadillo
Crazy Woman Driver	Flirting with Dikes
Happy Hooker	Revolt of the Dike Brigade
Names About Sexual Violence	**Names About Sex**
Cornholer's Incest	Foreplay
Gang Bang	For Sexual Favors
Double Ganger	Ménage à trois
Slam Bam Book Jam	Orgasm
Matricide	Celibate Mallard
Jack the Ripper	Swinging Hips
Slammer Jam	
Assault and Battery	
Psycho Killer	

(Harlin, 1986; Steiger, 1985; Waugh, 1982; Webster, 1987)

Proactive Strategies

When sexual harassment occurs, it exposes participants and staff to increased physical and emotional risks. It is imperative that experiential education programs take an active stance in preventing and interrupting sexual harassment. Experiential education programs need to have a sexual harassment policy which is distributed to all staff and students. This policy should include both a theoretical definition of sexual harassment and examples of behaviors that could constitute sexual harassment. This definition and examples need to cover the behavior of staff and students. The policy should also list the procedures for reporting a sexual harassment complaint

and should be relatively easy to execute so they are not a barrier or obstacle to reporting sexual harassment.

With these policies and procedures in place, both staff and students need to be educated about sexual harassment. The sexual harassment policies should be included in the staff manual. During staff training, it is important to review the sexual harassment policy and reporting procedures, ensure staff understand what sexual harassment is and that it will not be tolerated, and provide training for staff in interrupting peer and group harassment.

Along with the above training, staff members need to be instructed to use nonsexist and nonsexual teaching language and style. Paludi and Barickman (1991) suggest a number of techniques:

- When making general statements about women (or any other group), ensure they are based on accurate information. Universal generalizations about any social group, such as "Women can't do technical things like anchor systems," are likely, at best, to represent uncritical oversimplifications of selected norms.
- Avoid humor or gratuitous remarks that demean or belittle people because of gender or sexual orientation, just as you would avoid remarks that demean people because of their race, religion, or disability. Respect the dignity of all people.
- Avoid using generic masculine terms to refer to people of both sexes, such as "You guys," "manpower," and "two-man tents."
- When using illustrative examples, avoid stereotypes, such as making all authority figures men and all subordinates women.
- Try to monitor your behavior toward men and women participants. Ask, for example: Do you give more time to men than to women participants? Do you treat men more seriously than women participants? Are you less attentive to women participants' questions and concerns? Do you assume a heterosexual model when referring to human behavior?
- When assigning participants to temporary leadership or teaching roles, ensure balanced gender representation.
- Encourage participants to go beyond traditional gender roles when participating in program activities.

The use of these techniques creates a learning environment that is inclusive, empowering, and nonconducive to sexual harassment.

With this training, expect that staff should be able to educate participants about sexual harassment. Participants could receive a brochure outlining the sexual harassment policy and procedures with the information sent to them after registration or when they first arrive at the program. During the first safety briefing, the policy and procedures need to be reviewed to ensure participants understand them.

It is important for adventure educators to consider the dynamics of sexual harassment when forming groups. If possible, if the groups are to be coed, women should be placed in equal numbers to men. One outdoor organization is known for splitting its women students apart from each other. This results in women being placed in groups where they are outnumbered greatly by men. This practice may increase the opportunity for sexual harassment to occur.

Finally, sexual harassment takes place within a climate of secrecy, intimidation, and coercion. If a student or staff member finds herself in a remote wilderness location within this type of damaging climate, it may be impossible for her to enact the sexual harassment reporting procedures. For this reason, it is important that on long, field-based courses there be a mechanism for staff and students to communicate with someone outside of the immediate situation, such as the program director, if necessary. These mechanisms could include radio contact, written contact, or field visits by the program director. These measures would prevent someone from being trapped in a sexually harassing situation because of dependence on an instructor or co-staff member. The program evaluation forms should have questions asking if sexually harassing behavior occurred during the course to give participants and staff another opportunity to report it. It is important to provide many reporting methods because of the intimidating atmosphere that may surround sexual harassment.

Conclusion

The effects of sexual harassment conflict greatly with the benefits of participating in an experiential education program. Experiential education programs need to recognize that sexual harassment occurs and take proactive measures to prevent and interrupt it. These measures will make adventure programs more accessible, empowering, and safe for both women and men.

Additionally, further research is needed to determine the occurrence rates and circumstances of sexual harassment in experiential education programs. This information will assist experiential education programs in the continuing process of assessing their programs, educating their participants, and eradicating sexual harassment.

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